

# Special Announcements

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## INTERMINISTERIAL TEXTBOOK REPORT ANNOUNCED

A significant step in eradicating prejudice at its source—in children—was taken when the Minister of Education, Thomas Wells, announced the Report of the Interministerial Textbook Committee in October and the Government's intention to implement its recommendations.

The Committee was composed of the Chairman of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Dr. Daniel G. Hill, as Chairman, Dr. Lita-Rose Betcherman, former Director of the Women's Bureau, and Messrs Gordon Nelson and Peter Wiseman of the Ministry of Education. The Committee's Secretary was the Commission's education officer, Harold Attin.

The Committee based its Report on the book *Teaching Prejudice* (see *Special Announcements*, August, 1971) originally commissioned as a study by the Commission, and on a study by Mr. Nelson, which was also made public.

Mr. Wells told a meeting of the Canadian Association of Publishers' Educational Representatives that bias in textbooks affects native peoples, immigrants and women in particular. He outlined new procedures for examining manuscripts for bias through the Commission and for reviewing existing textbooks when they are reprinted. He said a study to identify sex-role stereotypes in textbooks—another recommendation of the Report—would be undertaken.

The Nelson study points out examples of slander against cultural minorities using, as its criterion, scholarly historical documentation. The study cites, as an example of bias expressed through verbal usage, the word "massacre", which is always used of Indians attacking whites, but never in the reverse case.

"Sometimes our authors are loathe to suggest that we, too, could be ruthless, bloody and murderous. They tend to slough off anything that suggests that at times there was little to choose between the Indian and the European."

The Director of Curriculum Development, J. K. Crossley, indicated that existing offensive textbooks will be removed gradually to avoid major dislocations.

The Textbook Committee's Report makes a number of recommendations. It advocates a procedure which, in essence, gives publishers the opportunity voluntarily to consult the Commission when a book is in the manuscript stage. The Commission will then use the services of carefully selected independent evaluators.

Among other recommendations are the following: the evaluation of the total treatment of an incident or subject from the point of view of proper scholarly historical balance and accuracy; the practice of indicating that biased descriptions are those of a contemporaneous historical source and not those of the author; the avoidance of pictures which portray minority groups in a derogatory light; the depiction of Canadian life for younger pupils to include people with surnames representing diverse backgrounds and in various economic and life-style circumstances; rectifying the omission of material on "controversial" subjects, on the contribution of immigrants to Canada's development and on the dynamics of prejudice.

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## COMMISSIONERS HOLD SECOND PUBLIC MEETING

London was the location of the second Commission public meeting, held in September, in line with the new policy of making the Commission better known and more accessible to community feedback. Representatives of different minority groups, unions, voluntary associations, educational institutions and concerned citizens were present. The meeting's Chairman was R. D. Johnston, Deputy Minister of Labour.

The Director of the Commission, Robert W. McPhee, introduced the district officer resident in London, Mr. Mark Nakamura, and the officer in Windsor, Miss Jo-Ann Jenkins. Mr. McPhee gave a report on staff work in southwestern Ontario and noted, in particular, Commission efforts to conciliate the friction between citizens of the Walpole Island Reserve and the town of Wallaceburg with respect to police treatment of Indians within the town.

Subjects aired before the five Commissioners, Chairman Dr. Daniel G. Hill, Dr. Lita-Rose Betcherman, Gordon Greenaway, Miss Valerie Kasurak and Professor Walter Currie, included the following: friction between native peoples and the majority group in the southwestern Ontario area, the shortage of staff to cover adequately the province as a whole, the ways in which the public can influence Government policy via the Commissioners and extend the Code to cover new social areas, the handling of referrals to other Government ministries and to federal government agencies, the job problems of Indians, the conciliation and Board of Inquiry procedures and the public's unawareness of the Commission.

One brief from the N'Amerind Friendship Centre was read to the meeting and another, on Canadian Black Studies, was presented to the Commissioners.

## TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF CODE FETED AT LUNCHEON

Preceding the Commission's public meeting, a luncheon was held to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the passage of the Code by the Ontario Legislature. The guest speaker was the Hon. Fern Guindon, Ontario Minister of Labour. He told an interested and involved audience of some 100 guests that there was general agreement that the Commission

is one of the most important agencies in the Provincial Government. Perhaps we might even say *the* most important. For of what use are any privileges and pleasures we may enjoy unless *all* of our citizens are free and equal, and able to enjoy a dignified human existence?

Noting that he has long been "encouraged by the continued growth and expansion" of the Commission, he stated that it now "enjoys international renown and respect". It was the first human rights commission in Canada, just as Ontario had the first enforceable human rights legislation in Canada. He expressed his appreciation of the staff of the Commission, singling out for special tribute the Chairman, Dr. Daniel G. Hill, for his dedication and leadership.

The minister reviewed the extensive amendments to the Code passed on June 30 of this year and noted that they are a "response to new needs perceived by the Government and requested by concerned groups in the community".

## ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSIONERS

Professor Walter Currie, Chairman of the Department of Native Studies at Trent University, spoke to the annual conference of the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies in San Francisco in July. The Chairman, Dr. D. G. Hill, and the Director, Mr. R. W. McPhee, also attended the conference.



Professor Currie's address, characterized by his usual humour and poetic tone, made a number of points. These included the following: Canada has *three* founding peoples, the native peoples, the French and the English; the Indians' basic orientation is to live in tune with nature, not "against" nature; the negative stereotypes of Indians, in the past and present, are the white man's invention; the Indians had their own religion and ethics before the white man came; Indians prefer to be educated, not in order to become red white men, but as native peoples, in their own communities, in their own ways, based on their own culture; white children need to be taught an accurate and historically balanced account of the Indians, past and present, and acceptance of the Indians on that basis.

A copy of his address is available upon request.

Commissioner Valerie Kasurak of Windsor attended, in the month of May, a seminar at York University sponsored by the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews, a banquet held by the Ukrainian Business & Professional Association for Ukrainian university graduates, and a reception given by the Government Offices of Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago. She acted as a judge for the Ford of Canada Man of the Year Award, which was awarded to Mr. Ralph McCurdy for his efforts towards community betterment.

In June Miss Kasurak acted as a moderator at the Heritage Ontario Congress and was guest speaker at the commencement exercises of the Windsor High School of Commerce. In September she was invited to the ceremonies for the new radio station in Windsor, CKLW.

Dr. Lita-Rose Betcherman was appointed chairman of the Interministerial Committee on the Status of Women Report. This Committee works within the office of the Provincial Secretary for Social Development.

## STATUS OF BOARDS OF INQUIRY

A second prosecution brought a final termination in the housing complaint of John R. Harris, a Canadian Black, against Victor Bouzide of Windsor. When a conciliation of the complaint could not be achieved, a Board of Inquiry was approved and Professor Walter S. Tarnopolsky, Vice President—Academic, York University, was appointed. The recommendations in his report were not complied with by the respondent, after a Ministerial Order was issued.

In April Mr. Bouzide was prosecuted for not acceding to the Ministerial Order and was convicted and fined fifty dollars. The presiding judge told him his was a continuing offence and that he could be prosecuted repeatedly.

As a result of the conviction in the second prosecution, Mr. Bouzide was fined seventy-five dollars with costs, and has since complied with the recommendations. He wrote a letter of apology to Mr. and Mrs. Harris and paid \$100 as compensation to them for their costs in finding alternative housing.

The Ottawa Separate School Board complied with the recommendations of the Board of Inquiry, also chaired by Professor Tarnopolsky, in the employment complaint of Mrs. Bonnie Gore. The School Board wrote a letter of apology to Mrs. Gore and a declaration of intent to the Commission. The letter reads:

The policy of the Board on the hiring of non-teaching staff has been amended in accordance with Section 4 of the Ontario Human Rights Code. Specifically, we can assure the Commission that creed or religious denomination will not be a factor considered in the hiring of non-teaching staff.

Since Mrs. Gore had found other employment, and was not interested in the position, the School Board was not requested to offer her a position.

